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# Walt Stanchfield 13

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Notes from Walt Stanchfield's Disney Drawing Classes

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“Learn to Cheat”

by Walt Stanchfield

### LEARN TO CHEAT



No, I am not trying to lead you astray. "Cheating" in drawing is a term used when some part of the figure is adjusted to help make the pose read more clearly. One of the most obvious places to introduce a cheat is in establishing a good silhouette. First, let's look at a drawing with a fairly good silhouette.



This drawing of Dawson clearly defines his hat, nose, mustache, mouth, hand, coattail, legs, etc. The stance, mood and personality is unmistakable. Incidentally, the 3rd dimensional elements in the drawing work equally well in making it a readable drawing.

## Learn to Cheat

If the drawing had not been so successful, “cheating” a little here and there would have helped. For instance the coattails, or the fingers, or the hat could have been lengthened or in some way made more obvious. Let’s take a less clear silhouette and see if it could be improved without substantially changing the pose. In the first attempt Dawson’s left elbow was extended to avoid the tangent it was forming with the backside. His right elbow was shortened to expose more cheek, and the tip of the hat was more clearly defined. In the second attempt the left arm was shortened and the backside extended (the opposite from the 1st), with a little of his shirrtail extended which helps to divide and define the upper body from the lower.



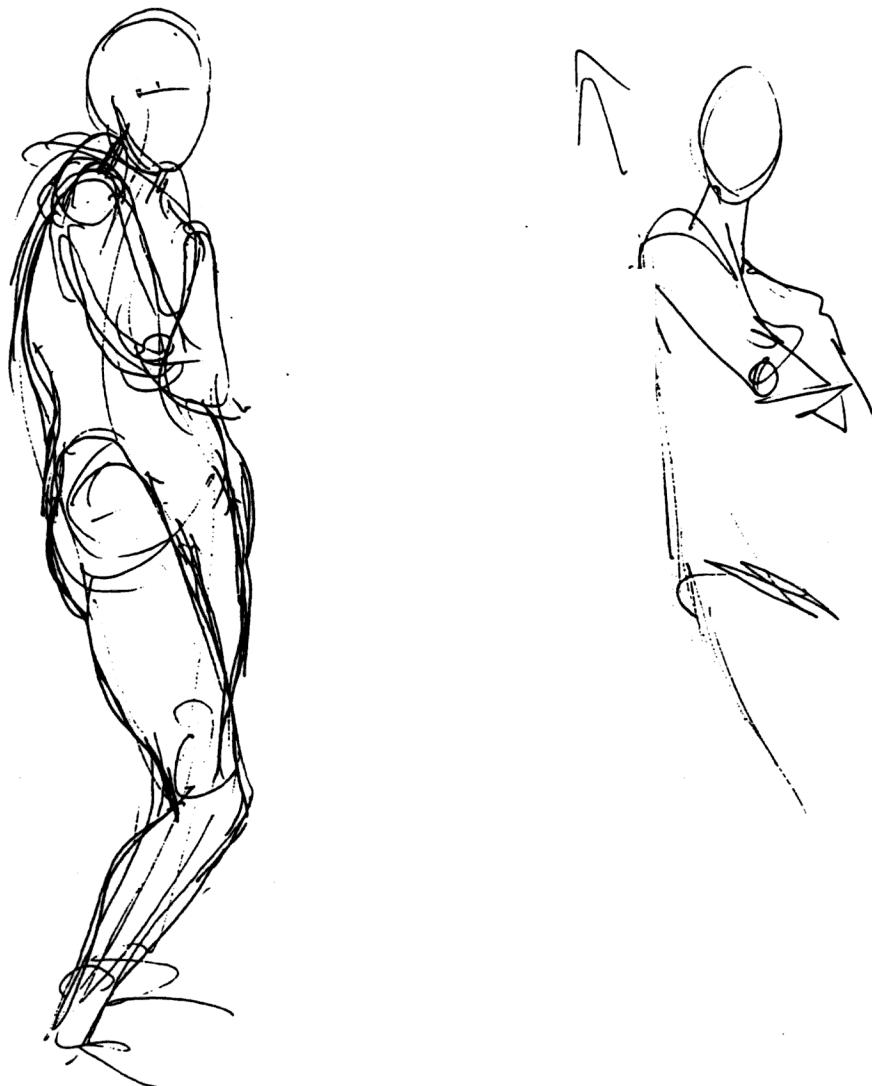
The fear of straying from what is before you while drawing from the live model can sometimes “tie your hands” (your drawing hands). An innocent little cheat may do such wonders for your drawing that any deviation from the “facts” will go unnoticed. A good place to practice cheating is while drawing from the human figure. Very often in a classroom situation you will be stuck with a difficult angle where ‘things that explain or complete the gesture are hidden from you. The challenge of adjusting the pose to better tell your story can be invigorating. The important thing is you are not bound to copy what is before you, but on the contrary, you are bound to tell the story of the gesture, even if you have to cheat to do it.

Caricature, one of the animator’s most valuable tools is a total cheat. An effective caricature can be so exaggerated that not one line of realism remains. Even so, a good caricature can be more “real” than a photographic copy. Tracing photostats for a scene of animation is sufficient proof of that.

So start now. Discover that creative freedom that releases you from the conventional copycat type of seeing, thinking and drawing - become a good cheater.

## Learn to Cheat

I saved 2 drawings from the evening class which may help to illustrate the point. In the first one, the model had assumed a rather haughty, officious air. It was subtle and the drapery was no help at all. One artist got trapped in the multitude of curves in the clothes and figure, and in attempting to copy what was there, missed the aloofness of the gesture. In my suggestion, I "cheated". I took out all the curves (I have a tendency to go to extremes when pointing out things like this), thrust the shoulder up, straightened out the hanging shirttail (thus accenting the shoulder lift), stretched the neck and added a better angle to the folded arms, and voila - instant arrogance.



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The other drawing was again from a deceptive pose, in that the clothes contained a lot of soft curves. In cases like this, one has to cheat a little and introduce what they know is happening rather than what they see. For instance, in this pose the girl's right shoulder had to lower in shape as well as position; the front of the neck had to stretch to reach from the raised chin to the lowered pit of the neck; and the coat had to hang with some straights to contrast with the bunched up cloth at the elbows.



## Learn to Cheat



Here are two beautiful drawings by Carl Erickson. Lots of “overlap”, “diminishing size”, “surface lines” and “foreshortening”. Observe how every line and shape and detail seem to direct your eye right to the center of interest, the center of interest being a look. Every line on the woman carries your eye to that space between her eye and the mirror. The man’s hat brim and shoulder form a path for his look to travel on. The book I got this from has this to say about Erickson and his drawings: “They give the impression of having sprung to life without suffering the usual labor pains. But his performance looks too easy; its nonchalance is deceptive. It is not accomplished without a struggle. Erickson, indeed is a hard-working man, a very serious artist who is usually practicing when not actually performing. In spare moments he is usually drawing from the model .... and his sketchbook goes with him to the restaurant and to the theatre.”

**Walt**